

The 2015-16 school year marks the second year of implementing the high school graduation requirement as defined by HB 278 – Alaska’s Education Opportunity Act. The law requires all grade 11 students, and all grade 12 students who have not previously done so, to take a college or career readiness assessment (CCRA) to earn a high school diploma in Alaska. The CCRA assessments are defined in statute and regulation as WorkKeys, ACT, and SAT. Students have the option to take either the career-readiness assessment (WorkKeys) or a college-readiness assessment (ACT or SAT). This document provides an overview of each assessment to assist students, their families, and educators in choosing an assessment that best fits a student’s post-secondary path.

### **Career-Readiness: WorkKeys**

Students in Alaska are required to take three WorkKeys assessments: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. ACT WorkKeys assessments are research-based measures of foundational work skills essential to career success. The information they produce 1) helps individuals document their skills and evaluate career opportunities; 2) supports employers to make sound decisions about who to hire, train, and promote; and 3) help educators prepare their students for the workplace and evaluate curricular outcomes.

ACT WorkKeys Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information form the basis of ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC), a nationally portable credential that certifies the skills most critical to success in the workplace, as well as other post-secondary career pathways.

The assessments are timed (paper/pencil 45 minutes per assessment, Internet Version 55 minutes).

<b>Applied Mathematics</b>  33 items	This assessment measures the skills people use when they apply mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems. The test questions require the examinee to set up and solve the types of problems and do the types of calculations that typically occur in the workplace. This test is designed to be taken with a calculator. A formula sheet that includes all formulas required for the assessment is provided.
<b>Locating Information</b>  38 items	This assessment measures the skill people use when they work with workplace graphics. Examinees are asked to find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic. They also must compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics. Students are asked to locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, forms, flowcharts, diagrams, floor plans, maps, and instrument gauges.
<b>Reading for Information</b>  33 items	The <i>Reading for Information</i> test measures the skill people use when they read and use written text in order to do a job. The written texts include memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. <i>Reading for Information</i> materials do not include information that is presented graphically, such as in charts, forms, or blueprints.

**College-Readiness: ACT**

The ACT is a curriculum- and standards-based educational and career planning tool that assesses students' academic readiness for college and provides college-readiness information to students, families and colleges. Includes an Interest Inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning, and a Student Profile Section that provides a comprehensive profile of a examinee's work in high school and his/her future plans. There are four required subtests: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing test.

<b>English</b>	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
<b>Mathematics</b>	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
<b>Reading</b>	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
<b>Science</b>	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
<b>Writing Test</b>	1 prompt	40 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. Includes an essay.

## College-Readiness: SAT

The SAT is a college admission test that provides college-readiness information to students, families and colleges.

Under the current SAT, students are required to take four sections: Mathematics, Critical Reading, Writing, and an Essay.

Under the redesigned SAT (*starting in March 2016*), students are required to take three sections: Reading, Writing and Language, and Math, with an optional Essay.

Current SAT			Redesigned SAT		
Component	Time Allotted (min.)	Number of Questions/ Tasks	Component	Time Allotted (min.)	Number of Questions/ Tasks
Critical Reading	70	67	Reading	65	52
Writing	60	49	Writing and Language	35	44
Essay	25	1	Essay (optional)	50	1
Mathematics	70	54	Math	80	58
Total	225	171	Total	180 (230 with Essay)	154 (155 with Essay)

### Comparison of the Major Features: Current SAT and Redesigned SAT

Category	Current SAT	Redesigned SAT
<b>Total Testing Time*</b>  *Redesigned SAT testing time subject to research	3 hours and 45 minutes	3 hours (plus 50 minutes for the Essay [optional])
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critical Reading</li> <li>2. Writing</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence-Based Reading and Writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reading Test</li> <li>○ Writing and Language Test</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Math</li> <li>3. Essay (optional)</li> </ol>
<b>Important Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on general reasoning skills</li> <li>• Emphasis on vocabulary, often in limited contexts</li> <li>• Complex scoring (a point for a correct answer and a deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued emphasis on reasoning alongside a clearer, stronger focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings most important for college and career readiness and success</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact</li> <li>• Rights-only scoring (a point for a correct answer but no deduction for an incorrect answer; blank</li> </ul>

**COLLEGE AND CAREER- READINESS ASSESSMENTS**

<b>Current SAT</b>		<b>Redesigned SAT</b>
		responses have no impact on scores)
<b>Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required and given at the beginning of the SAT</li> <li>• 25 minutes to write the essay</li> <li>• Tests writing skill; students take a position on a presented issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional and given at the end of the SAT; postsecondary institutions determine whether they will require the Essay for admission</li> <li>• 50 minutes to write the essay</li> <li>• Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; students produce a written analysis of a provided source text</li> </ul>
<b>Score Reporting*</b>  <b>*Redesigned SAT scores subject to research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale ranging from 600 to 2400</li> <li>• Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Critical Reading; 200 to 800 for Mathematics; 200 to 800 for Writing</li> <li>• Essay results scaled to multiple-choice Writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale ranging from 400 to 1600</li> <li>• Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing; 200 to 800 for Math; 2 to 8 on each of three dimensions for Essay</li> <li>• Essay results reported separately</li> </ul>
<b>Subscore Reporting</b>	None	Subscores for every test, providing added insight for students, parents, admission officers, educators, and counselors